

The Northern Border Regional Commission has awarded grants totaling \$373,447 for regional development projects in Vermont, Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) announced today.

The grants will support the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail in Lamoille County and develop key regional business clusters in the Northeast Kingdom.

The \$249,982 grant for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail will be leveraged by a \$5.2 million grant Sanders previously secured for the construction of a 93-mile, four-season, multi-use trail across northern Vermont.

The \$123,465 grant to the Northeast Kingdom will complement the recently announced \$170 million expansion of the Jay Peak Resort expected to deliver 5,000 new jobs to the region.

"These grants match federal investments to local priorities, moving these ideas from plans, into action," Leahy said. "They align with key economic strengths and goals of these communities and will help with tourism, recreation and other community goals."

"These two grants will help bolster efforts to promote conservation, tourism and recreation, which are fundamental to the economy of northern Vermont," Sanders said.

"These grants will bring funding to two projects that are vital to both Vermonters and our visitors," Welch said. "Projects that build on Vermont's tourism industry while creating jobs and boosting local economies are simply common sense."

Vermont's delegation was influential in creating the border commission, which directly invests federal resources for economic development and job creation in economically distressed regions of northern New Hampshire, New York, Maine and Vermont. Last year, the commission awarded nine grants to the four states totaling \$1.45 million, including \$206,690 for projects in Vermont.

Eligible projects include those that develop regional infrastructure, support job creation and economic development, promote sustainable land use or develop renewable energy sources.